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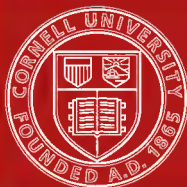
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JEPHTHA



JEPHTHA
A DRAMA
TRANSLATED
FROM THE
LATIN OF
GEORGE
BUCHANAN
BY A GORDON
MITCHELL
MINISTER OF
KILLEARN



ILLUSTRATED BY
JESSIE M. KING

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PREFACE.

AT the time when George Buchanan was one of the professors in the Collège de Guyenne at Bordeaux, it was the custom of the students to act Latin plays. For the stage of the College, Buchanan translated the *Medea* and *Alcestis* of Euripides, and also composed two tragedies — *Baptistes* and *Jephthes*. “The tragedy of *Jephthes*,” says Irving (*Memoirs of Buchanan*, 2nd edition, p. 28), “is conformable to the models of the Grecian theatre, and is not destitute of interest. The subject is highly dramatic ; it is a subject which Buchanan’s great exemplar Euripides might have been inclined to select. The situation of a father who had unwarily subjected himself to the dreadful necessity of sacrificing a beloved and only child, the repugnant and excruciating sensations of the mother, the daughter’s mingled sentiments of heroism and timidity are

delineated with considerable felicity of dramatic conception."

The attention of the present translator was first drawn to this powerful drama by the following words of Mr. Hume Brown (*Life of George Buchanan*, 1890, p. 121):—"Of his two original dramas, *Jephthes* and *Baptistes*, the former, as he himself justly thought, is undoubtedly much the more striking dramatic performance. The story of Jephtha and his daughter is clearly one which presents all the materials for tragedy of the highest order; and Buchanan, shackled though he is by conventional forms and a dead language, has certainly risen to the greatness of his theme. His conception of Jephtha and his daughter Iphis, is indeed quite Miltonic in intensity and elevation. But here, again, we can but express regret that there should have been lost to Buchanan's native literature a talent which, even under such untoward conditions, could achieve so much."

Having conceived the idea of rendering *Jephthes* into English verse, the translator, through the kindness of an esteemed parishioner—Sir Archibald Lawrie of the Moss—whose house stands on the site formerly occupied by that in which George Buchanan was born, obtained access to the Advocates' Library, where he found two translations of this drama—one into French verse—*Jephté, ou Le Vœu, Tragedie traduite du Latin de Buchanan*, par Florent Chrestien (Paris: par Mamert Patisson, Imprimeur du Roy, 1587, 12mo);* the other into English prose, by William Tait, schoolmaster at Drummelzier, Edinburgh, 1750.

This translation into English verse is offered to

* Irving states (footnote in *Memours*, 2nd edition, p. 36), that there were two editions of the French version issued previously to that mentioned above—*Orleans, Loys Rabier*, 1567, 4to; Paris, Robert Estienne, 1573, 8vo; and a later one—M. Patisson, 1595, 12mo. He also mentions an Italian version—*L'Iette Tragedia di Giorgio Bucanano recata di Latino in Volgare da Scipione Bargagli*. In Venezia per Matteo Valentini; 1600, 18vo.

the public in the hope that it may be found to reflect some of the sublimity and beauty of a noble poem by that illustrious Scotsman concerning whom Joseph Scaliger wrote :—

“ Namque ad supremum perducta Poetica culmen
In te stat, nec quo progrediatur habet.
Imperii fuerat Romani Scotia limes :
Romani eloquii Scotia finis erit.”

KILLEARN MANSE,
November, 1902.

**To the Memory
of
My Parents**

.
“ ‘ Strength came to me that equal’d my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire.

“ ‘ It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father’s will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

“ ‘ Moreover, it is written that my race
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.’ Here her face
Glowed as I looked at her.

“ She locked her lips : she left me where I stood :
‘ Glory to God,’ she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.”

TENNYSON, “ *A Dream of Fair Women.*”

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JEPHTHES,

SIVE

VOTUM,

TRAGÆDIA

AUCTORE

Georgio Buchanano

SCOTO

THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE AND DEDICATION
TO THE COMTE DE BRISSAC.

TO
THAT MOST DISTINGUISHED MAN
CHARLES DU COSSE',
Marshal of France, and Commander-in-Chief of the
King of France among the Turinese,

THE PREFACE
OF
THE TRAGEDY OF JEPHTHA.

To some I may appear to be committing an act of folly in sending this small literary gift to you who from your youth upwards have been devoted to military studies, and always occupied with arms and wars; but, for the most part, those that will deem my act one of folly are persons who either do not sufficiently consider the affinity that exists between arms and letters, or else are defective in their perception of your genius. For military science and

the study of letters are not so incompatible as most people wrongly suppose : on the contrary, rather is there between them an intimate alliance, and a certain subtle harmony of nature. For, although in some past ages, either from indolence, or from some erroneous conviction, these professions have been sundered from one another, nevertheless the wrong notion of the unlearned cannot so far prevail as that they themselves should forget their ancient and (so to speak) natural kinship. For all the Generals of every age who have done famous deeds have been either themselves most learned men, or have bestowed the deepest affection upon such as were distinguished for their learning. And, indeed, it is impossible that a great and exalted mind which keeps its regards fixed upon eternity to the neglect of that which is transitory, should not also love literature which is the guardian of remembrance and antiquity. And, for the most part, the men that hate and despise literature are those that, basely living a life of knavery and wickedness, dread the conscience of posterity, as Claudian sings, it seems to me, with no less truth than felicity :—

Brave men delight to hear
The Muse their deeds rehearse,
And verse is loved by him
That does what's worth a verse.

Then, on the other hand, as for those who give their every endeavour to the task of setting before themselves for a model the likeness of consummate valour,

——— and drinking in, with mental eyes,
What Nature to the mortal sight denies,

how great joy may we think will possess their hearts should they have obtained a (so to speak) living and breathing image of what they, with such earnestness, have pursued? But to this mutual admiration of valour, and this affinity of nature of which I have spoken, there falls to be added a kind of mutual accommodation. For as the doer of famous deeds justly looks up to the man whom he recognises as a master and artist qualified for the task of celebrating and commemorating his achievements, and cherishes as a parent one from whom he expects to receive not merely such brief loan of light as we enjoy, but that much longer life which is laid up in the recollection of posterity; so, on the other hand, the man of letters gladly occupies that field, and employs that subject-matter provided for him by the man of action, upon which his own reputation depends, and

Whereby he soars into the general ken,
And flies in triumph through the mouths of men.

For both alike seek a fruit of glory, of unequal excellence, indeed, in the opinion of men, yet with equal zeal, and from the same source. But all who, as Sallust says, "seek the fame of notable deeds or of the liberal arts," are thus far related to one another. And, surely, the above considerations come home to you, since, from the time of your earliest youth you have manifested such love for your country, such courage in war, such moderation and fairness in peace, as furnish to all who cultivate letters a pattern of your good qualities which they both can, and ought, to set forth for the imitation of posterity; since, also, albeit in a different walk of life, you have taken it upon yourself to cherish and protect literature, deprived as it is of the patronage of your brother, Philip Cossé, Bishop of Constance; since, further, you ever consort with men of the highest learning, with whom, even in the midst of the heat of the fiercest campaign,

You temper stern Minerva with the Muse,
And with Apollo moderate Getic Mars;

since, in fine, you cause your son in his boyhood to be so trained in literature as that he may be able, not only to maintain; but even to increase the so generous heritage of celebrity and fame which he has received from his father. For myself, before

you had even seen me, and when I was altogether unknown to you save by repute as a scholar, you have so cherished me with all the offices of kindness and generosity that, should my genius yield any fruit, should there be vouchsafed any offspring, as it were, to my vigils, then with justice it should redound to you. Hence, indeed, it is that this my *Jephtha*, which has hitherto dreaded the public eye and the assemblages of men, in reliance upon your patronage, eagerly goes forth, not without uplifting itself into some expectance even of popular favour. For what may it not hope from auspices under which it sees military discipline corrected in accordance with the example of ancient severity, and the old martial glory of France restored; when it sees law and equity go hand in hand with warlike courage; when it sees the completest freedom in everything conjoined with the completest self-restraint in everything, not only on your own part, but also on the part of all that are yours? This it is that prompts my desire that this my little work should go forth, under your most powerful name, into the hands of men. And surely you (as I hope) will take in good part both this testimony to your good offices towards me, and this expression of my warm regards towards you. Farewell. At Paris, 27th July, 1554.

THE ARGUMENT :

Taken from the Book of Judges.

JEPHTHA, the son of Gilead, on the death of his father was driven from home by his brethren, who held that it was unfair that an illegitimate son should have a share equal to that of lawful sons in the paternal inheritance. Under stress of poverty, he collected a band of robbers and lived by plunder. Such was the courage that he displayed in this mode of life, that, first by his kinsfolk, and then by the rest of the Hebrews, he was chosen as leader against the Ammonites, who, for nearly twenty years, had subjected them to the most grievous bondage. When about to set forth on his campaign, he vows that, if he should return in triumph, he will sacrifice to God whatever first should come forth out of his house. The first to meet him on his return is his daughter ; he offers her up to God.

PERSONÆ.

AN ANGEL, *who delivers the Prologue.*

STORGE, *the wife of Jephtha.*

IPHIS, *the daughter of Jephtha.*

CHORUS *of maidens of Israel.*

JEPHTHA, *commander of the army of Israel.*

SYMMACHUS, *a friend of Jephtha.*

A PRIEST.

A MESSENGER.

JEPHTHA.



PROLOGUE.



An Angel.

I, A winged messenger of Him whose hand
Holdeth the thunder, am to Israel sent,
And to the land promised to Israel's seed—
The land predestined to imperial sway
Had it but kept inviolate the pact
Of covenant divine, but which, afeard
Under the slavish yoke of Ammon's arms,
Hath borne whate'er of sad, or cruel, or fierce
A wrathful foe essays, or vanquished dreads.
By such discomfiture dispirited
Slowly the rebel race is brought to know }

Their fathers' God—to see and understand

The sin, the falsehood, and the mockery

Of worship misbestowed on alien gods,

And, having seen, to count it vanity :

Slowly, I say, and late, the rebel race

Returns as prodigal to father true.

Alas ! the mind of man, prone to extremes,

Is swollen with pride by prosperous success.

The more God in His goodness gives His child

The deeper does he sink in careless ease,

The higher is his foolish heart uplift

And puffed with empty pride. As horse unbroke

Fumes 'gainst his master in his obstinate pride,—

If he perceive a slackness in the rein,

Only by dint of bit and bloody spur

He learns to obey and own his rider lord ;—

So this perverse and stiff-necked race of men,

To evil prone, if God laid by His scourge,

Took to itself new gods, and sacrificed

At Gentile shrines, and alien rites observed.

Therefore their God, in kindness, tames their proud

And wayward hearts by famine and the sword

And by the plague, curbing their insolent rage ;

But now, again, lest faith of heart should fail,
He timely mitigates their chastisement,
He sends His prophets, raises men of war
Who free the nation from their slavish chains
And force them to resume the ancient rites :
As instance, now He hath incited Ammon
Against that rebel race, to error sold ;
But, setting bounds unto His righteous wrath,
In mercy He hath sent deliverance,
Not by the hand of any mighty man
Besieged by crowds of suppliants and blest
With powerful offspring, but by the chosen hand
Of exiled Jephtha, whom his brethren scorn,
Jephtha, the harlot's son, whom God elects
Lest the proud race take glory to themselves
For what the arm of God alone achieves,
That Ammon, too, may know he overcame
Not by his own might, but as the instrument
To execute the vengeance of the Lord.
And, yet again, lest Jephtha's self-esteem
Be measured by the issue of the war,
Lest good success inflate his mind with pride,
He shall forthwith be stricken with a grief

Domestic, and his haughty heart shall break
And sink before the stern decree of God.
For, as he arms against the faithless foe,
He has resolved, if victory be vouchsafed,
To sacrifice whate'er he first may meet,
As home he fares in triumph from the field.
[Alack ! how vast the weight of woe at hand
For thee, O hapless man ! how keen the grief
That soon shall overwhelm thee ! how art thou deceived
In fond expectance of approaching joy !
Thy daughter, only scion of thy stock,
Shall first present herself unto her sire
That she may hail thee victor in the fight.
Then shall the miserable maiden pay
With interest dread—even with her virgin blood—
The mortal price of her untimely joy.
And lo ! her stricken mother quits the house
Where, through the silent watches she has tossed
And shuddered in the clutch of frightful dreams.
Her daughter walks beside her, and the twain,
By downcast looks, by gestures of despair,
By lips in sorrow sealed, make manifest
The heavy melancholy of their minds.

STORGE AND IPHIS.

Storge.

Alas me ! so great my terror, that my heart
Yet knocks against my breast and my mind reels
With horror, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my
mouth.

Well-nigh am I bereft of power to speak,
So frightful are the visions of the night
That terrify and keep me from my rest,
And burn my anxious heart with grievous care.
But, Thou high God that rul'st the shining sky,
Avert from us and turn against our foes
The doleful, deadly evil that I dread :
Be favourable to me and to my child,
The only hope and solace of her house,
The only prop of my declining years.

Iphis.

Nay but, sweet mother, if you prophesy,
Foretell a fairer future ; cast away

The spectral fears that prey upon your mind.
Be not disquieted, but calmly scorn
These brain-sick fancies ; scorn them and forget.

Storge.

Would that I could ! but oft as I recall
My new-born dread, with terror quails my mind,
And the stern phantom of my dismal dream
Stalks through my soul and horrifies my heart.
When night had brought the gentle hour of rest
And, at the touch of sleep, the world was dumb,
Lo ! I beheld a pack of ravening wolves,
Their wild and bloody jaws agape for prey,
And flecked with foam, together headlong rush,
With curv'd claws, upon a peaceful flock,
Bereft, it seemed, of shepherd's watchful eye.
Then did the guardian dog, to duty true,
Repel the wolves, and save the trembling sheep :
But then upon the feeble flock he turned,
Yet breathless with the memory of their fear,
And from my very bosom snatched a lamb,
The which his brutal tooth did lacerate.]

O Sun ! O restless Moon ! O glittering Stars
That light your fires above the silent earth !
And thou, O Night, that knowest the dismay
Brought on thy sable wings, in dreams, to me !
If Fate hold ought calamitous in store,
If any woe be destined to my child,
Wrap, ere it fall, this head in final gloom,
In pity of the anguish of my breast
That, whilst in dire suspense as to her lot,
Is torn between a brood of hopes and fears.

Iphis.

Why, mother, dost thou torture thus thy mind,
And by thine own, augment the public grief,
And whet anew the edge of anxious care ?
Lay by thy plaint on this auspicious day,
And gladly go to hail my sire's return,
The rather that (unless with presage vain
My overweening heart deceives my mind)
He shall come home, splendid with costly spoils,
Upon his native country and his race,
Conferring weal and praise and endless fame.

Storge.

Therewith does not accord the constant tone
Of the sad life destined by Fate for me.
What day for me has been devoid of tears
Since first I issued from my mother's womb?
My youth beheld the bondage of the land,
The direful menace of a foreign host,
Seizure of cattle, fields unharvested,
Bloodshed and carnage, desolation, fire,
And holy rites with heathenish confused.
The gentle flow of life from anguish free
Hath not been mine to feel : wave urges wave,
Billow gives place to billow that succeeds,
Each dying day by new-born day is sped,
And ever thus it is my hap to see
New ills come hard on old in train unbroke,
Grief take grief's place, and woe on woe attend.
Brother and sire the rage of war laid low. . . .
O child ! thy mother, with distress foredone,
Grows grey amid the slaughter of her kin,
And now her husband with a faithless foe
Contents. But evil greater yet than these
My fearful mind forebodes.

Iphis.

Unbridled fear
Makes ready use of adverse auguries.

Storge.

Would that I knew by prosperous report
My lord returned, his ranks without a gap,
His family safe.

Iphis.

Without a doubt my sire
Scathless shall come. God, at whose hest he fought,
Will lead him home with new-won praises fraught.

CHORUS.

O GLASSY stream of Jordan,
Whose flow maintains the verdure of our vale,
Thridding thy placid course
Among the fertile meads of Israel,
And thou, fair grove of palmy Salem,
That shed'st no leaf in Winter's cold,
Say, shall I ever behold
The golden light of an auspicious morn
When, free in my country's emancipation,
Free from the spirit of gloom,
I shall hail the release of the nation
From her barbarous foemen's scorn,
And the chains of her slavish doom ?

The high-born race of Israel
Calls an ignoble enemy her master,
And we, whom Pharoah, haughty king,
Whose rushing chariot-wheels
Upon their axle-trees displayed

The keen-edged battle blade,
Did never make afraid—
We, who escaped the rage of the Red Sea
Reserved for Egypt's dire disaster—
We, to whose hearts the desert did not bring
Despair—Arabian waste that never feels
The share of any plough—
We who did still uplift a fearless brow
When mighty sons of Anak would appal—
We, the same race, are now
Become to timid Ammon thrall ;
And 'tis a craven thing,
A thing of which the shame exceeds the ill,
Beneath a coward lord to bow—
To feel his hateful yoke and yet be still.
But thou, O Father, who art over all,
Thou, who the swelling sea
Layest to rest at will,
And who again the squall
Obedient to Thy call
Commandest to arise
From out the stormy West,
And make the scowling clouds to flee,

And rouse the tranquil ocean from his rest—
[Thou, whose dread word can make
The firm-set earth to quake,
And stay the motion of the rolling skies—
Cease from Thy wrath, O cease !
Let our past sufferings suffice,
And for Thy chosen race oppress
Some gracious remedy devise
To heal the weary land, and give it peace.

But, if our sins demand a doom
That mercy gives no room ;
If still implacable, Thou look'st askance
Upon Thy once loved race,
And turnest from their plaint Thy face ;
If, O our God, in hopeless gloom
Thy rebel sons their orphaned way must trace
Beneath Thy wrath that must consume
The chosen lot of Thine inheritance ;—
O, then, to Thee we cry aloud,
Let not the Syrian, nor Ammon hateful,
Nor Pharoah, big with menace proud,
Perform Thy purpose fateful,

Nor in the battle of the Lord
Be power assigned unto a godless sword.

Thyself, the rather, heavenly Sire
Visit us in Thine ire—
Grasp in Thy hand Thy bolt of forked fire,
And with the torch of Thine avenging flame
Destroy the cities that disown Thy name.
Or, in Thy judgment's hour,
When there is none to save,
Bid yawning earth devour,
Or let Thy voice command
The mighty ocean-wave
To overspread the land
And draw a sinful people to their grave.]

So pray we, Lord of Hosts,
Lest the fierce foe grow vain, ✓
The worshippers of senseless posts,
Who with unlawful rites Thy shrines profane.
So pray we, lest Thine anger stern,
The Ammonite to his own glory turn,
Offering his sacrifice perfumed

To stocks with rottenness consumed,
The while, with speech insane,
He brags Thou could'st not save the land
And chosen people doomed
From his victorious hand.

Ah, wretch ! enjoy thy laughter !
Soon bitter weeping cometh after :
Of tears a flowing river
Shall bear away thy joy for ever :
And light and swift the hour is hither flying—
(If hope be not defeated,
Nor the fond prophet cheated
By semblance vain and lying)—
The hour is on the wing,
The time will soon be here
When he who now exulteth,
And God's own folk insulteth,
Shall for his mirth pay dear,
Shall feel in turn that grievous thing,
The bondman's weary sighing.



Because it cannot be 7
That evermore
Thy holy people's gore
Shall cry for vengeance, Lord, to Thee ;
Nor wilt Thou give Thine altars o'er
For ever to the stain
Of heathen rites profane. └

O, would that heavenly grace
Might lengthen out the space
Of time I have to live,
And me this favour give—
My term to that bright hour prolong
When, in our fathers' ancient way,
Anew to Thee our sacred rites we pay,
Anew Thy holy name adore,
And loud Thy mercies trace
With a full heart, in grateful strains of song.

But see ! a messenger with hasting step
Draws hither ; and, unless I judge amiss,
He cometh from the field. I know him well ;
'Tis even so. I long to hear his news.

MESSENGER AND CHORUS.

Messenger.

HAIL ! daughters of our father Abraham,
And holy seed of truly holy sire.
Is this the house of Jephtha, the commander ?
Or do my wandering feet mistake their way ?

Chorus.

It is, indeed, his house, and this his child.
But, if thou hast a moment's leisure, tell
What word of hope thou bearest from the field.

Messenger.

In sooth, the very thing I come to do.
The enemy are quelled and put to rout ;
The day of triumph, wealth, and fame has dawned ;
Our troops are safe. Such, in a word, my news.

Chorus.

Thou speakest volumes in that word ; but come,
Inform us first of this—if but thine ear
Have heard, or eyes perceived whereof thou tell'st.

Messenger.

My words are gathered from no idle talk.
I speak, as one who in the fight took part,
Of things both seen and done, and true and sure.

Chorus.

Pray, then, unfold thy tidings of the fight.

Messenger.

Gladly to you my joyful tale I tell.
Soon as the morn suffused the heav'ns with rose ✓
Ammon, intolerant of dull delay,
With dreadful din of warlike chariots,
Poured forth his horse and foot into the field.
Battalion by battalion he deployed
His infantry in battle-line ; while flashed

Their harness and their sword-blades in the sun :
His vanguard was a formidable troop
Of chariots with their sickled axle-trees :
Squadrons of horse guarded this flank and that.
[Meanwhile our army, placing not their trust
In the rude strength of arms and warlike show,
But looking to the faithfulness of God,
And to avenge His quarrel just resolved,
Held to the heights that skirt the open plain.
And there essayed our leader to conclude,
Ere blood was spilled, a fair and righteous peace.
Forth hied a herald to the enemy's lines,
To offer counsel that both sides, content
With their aforetime frontiers, should abstain
From mutual injury and violence ;
And, touching ought assumed by force, thereof
Should to the owner restitution make,
Thus choosing peace in preference to war,
And settled terms rather than doubtful strife.
But the proud foe, that placed his trust in arms,
Fierce-railing on our herald, and to abuse
Adding envenomed threats, declared he sought
[By war most just and pious to regain

Those lands whence Israel by force of arms
Had driven forth the Ammonite, what time
They journeyed from the valley of the Nile.
Those lands, quoth he, did they persist to hold,
Did they unsheathe the sword to ward the wrong
Their sword had done, refusing to restore
The territory they had snatched by force,
Then would the avenging gods respect his plea.
But, should the Hebrew race elect to yield
What they by force obtained, and freely cede
The land that Arnon and the Jabbok bound,
The space between the desert's utmost reach
And the stream Jordan's gently-rolling wave,
Then let them know that Ammon was prepared
On terms of justice to conclude a peace,
Which, so concluded, they would sacred hold,
To high advantage of the nations twain.
The herald bringing word to such effect,
Jephtha once more despatched him with reply]
Immediate : neither he, nor yet his sires
Had ought of injury, by force or fraud,
Against the Ammonitish people done :
That the same lands he asked them to restore

Had never been by Ammon's bounds embraced,
But had by Jacob's progeny been held,
Without a challenge, for three hundred years.
Meanwhile no word is said of doubtful right,
In earnest or in jest, unless it be
That they will yield to thee of right whate'er
Chemosh, thy god, has held, and God the Lord
Will quit the lands that now He calls His own.
He will not quit them : as before, in war
Victorious, He of lands our foes despoiled,
So now the same just Judge will give this fight
A favourable issue, as accords
With equity and justice.

Thus replied

The herald, and at once a tumult hoarse
Rose through the air and smote the skyey vault, ✓
The shout of men, the snort of steeds of war,
The clash of arms, the rattling chariots' boom.
Heaven bellows back the din ; earth on her poles,
Afflicted, groans ; and, from the hills repelled,
Comes replication of the battle's roar.
Each army for the mastery contends
By valour or by craft ; now this that struck

In turn is stricken ; and now this that drave
In turn is driven : the rivers redden with blood :
A cloud of dust obscures the face of heaven
With murky night : emboldened by his strength,
Ammon pressed hotly on : faith in our God
And our more righteous cause incited us
To fight with spirit equal to his own.]
While yet each host urged forward its attack
Unyielding, lo ! amid the cloud of dust,
Amid the plaints and groans of them that fell,
And shouts of captains cheering on their men,
The cloud withdrew, the sun shone forth again ;
Pervaded either side a thunderous noise
Ascending to the sky ; a spirit base
Of fear unmans the warriors ; nerveless hands
Wield feeble blades ; an icy chill lays hold
Upon their stiffening limbs ; and straightway now
Our general, with visage keen, lifts up
A mighty voice, and cries : “ Father of all, 7
Lead Thou us on ! we follow in the fight
Thee and Thine Angel. Lo ! our God, our God
Lays low our foemen with these flames : behold,
With shining squadrons are the heav'ns afire.”

Now, when this word passed through the armies
twain,

Madly one side betook itself to flight;

With heart renewed, the other sets upon

The panic-stricken fugitives ; nor ends

The flight nor the pursuit, till gloomy night,

✓ Drawing her sable curtain o'er the scene,

└ To us gives rest, to them a hiding-place.

Chorus.

Why, then, leads not the victor back his troops ?

Messenger.

Stay, till thou hear the end of the whole war.

Chorus.

Perchance the foe took heart and fell on him.

Messenger.

Yes, if dead men take heart ; for God has led

The total strength of that perfidious race

Into one battle, there to mow it down.

Hence, either, slain upon the field, they hold
In heaps of dead the ground whereon they stood,
Or else their carrion, scattered o'er the land
In ghastly carnage, feeds the maws of kites.
Our prescient leader looked to future years, 7
And guarded 'gainst recurrence of the war.
He has obtained a peace that will descend
To children's children. Fetching compass swift
Round Ammon's force of whatsoever name,
Our general victorious has destroyed
The walls, and overthrown the power of full
A score of towns ; giv'n houses to the flames ;
Put to the sword the males ; wasted the fields.
Only their feeble greybeards, tender lads,
And their unwarlike women wander o'er
The lonesome land, and wail their country's fall.]

CHORUS.

BRINGER of the golden light,
Sun ! that ever onward glidest—
Thou that o'er the day presidest,
And with wandering flame so bright
Seasons of the globe dividest !
After weary years a score,
Thou with blessed beams abidest
Over Israel free once more.

An attack of evil omen,
Made by hordes of haughty foemen,
Jephtha with his right hand foiled—
Crushed the spirit of fierce Ammon,
And the spoiler now is spoiled.

Scythian string propelled the steel
Of their wingéd shafts : 'twas bootless.
Flashed the scythe-blade on the wheel :
Yet their onset keen was fruitless.

Not their horses' might could save ;
Not their serried host so brave ;
Nothing, nothing them availeth
Whom the God of heaven assaileth.

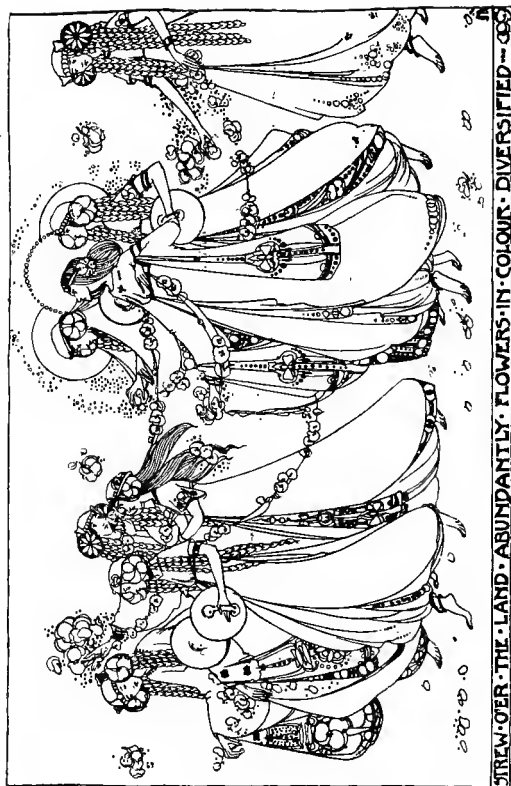
[Now be instructed, ye infidels !
Stocks and stones are no Deity.
God is never the statua
Graven by skilful artificer ;
God is never the handiwork
Fashioned of clay that he moisteneth
Deftly by hand of the modeller,
Who, by dint of his mimicry,
[Feigneth the mortal countenance.

God the Highest inhabiteth
Shining celestial citadels—
Maker and Guard of the universe—
[Lord of omnipotent majesty,
Not by the eye discernible—
Nor is portraying Divinity
Ever an art attainable
[By the hand of humanity.

He the insensate haughtiness
Curbeth of kings, and impious
Vows and wishes inordinate
Bringeth to nought in His righteousness.

He the innocent breast of the
Sorely afflicted sufferer
Timely with succour alleviates—
Raiseth from dust the penniless—
Likewise the lowly custodian,
Shepherd of flock unsavoury,
Lifteth to golden sovereignty—
Crowneth with kingly diadem
Humble temples of husbandmen.

Exquisite work of intelligence—
Earth of whatever latitude!
Land where the Daystar orient
Poureth his earliest radiance!
Burning land where the Light-bringer
Rideth in glory meridian!
Thou that of Tagus, statelily
Rolling his golden plenitude,



STREW OVER THE LAND ABUNDANTLY FLOWERS IN COLOUR DIVERSIFIED

Drinkeſt ! and thou that inhabitest
Regions condemned to tolerate
Burden of ſnows perpetual !
Own Him, and love, and adoringly
Praise this Monarch and Deity.

Come, then, maidens of Iſrael ! ✓
Faſten your golden necklaces ;
Let your tresses be redolent—
Let them breathe of ambrosia.
Come, ye maidens of Iſrael !
Bind on your brows for ornament
Flaſhing jewels of India.
Strew o'er the land abundantly
Flowers in colour diverſified.
When ſhall your cymbals ſilvery,
Strings of your lyre and psaltery,
Flute of the numerous apertures,
Cease to offer adoringly
Praise to your Lord the Conqueror ?

*how silly!
God is dead
NO
YES*

Who but ſtamps the earth with a
Glorious rapture of liberty ?

Who but gladly expels from his
Breast corroding solicitude,
Giving his hours to melodious
Singing and holiday mirth-making?

Bring the Lord of the herd to be
Slain as a solemn sacrifice.
Let the flame of your holocaust
Lift a cloud to the firmament,
Breathing aroma of essences,
Spicy odours of Araby.

Thou, O child of our general,
Hope of a noble family,
Don thy raiment magnificent,
Go thou with joy unspeakable,
Greet the sire that returns to you,
Clasp him with arms affectionate.
Purple be thy habiliments :
Bind, O Iphis, thy ringleted
Tresses : the shout of the soldiery
Striketh thine ear : and, O damosel,
See ! thy father approacheth us.

JEPHTHA.

Jephtha.

RULER of all the earth, the one true God,
Thou gracious Deity, supreme in strength
And might, Who art at once the stern Avenger
And Father all benign—dreadful and stern
To them that hate Thee, but to them Thou lov'st
The God of tender mercy and salvation—
Thou that in wrath art terrible, and yet
Easy to be entreated—Fire of love
And Fire of righteous anger—just the doom
Of bondage Thou dost visit us withal.
We have been guilty of impiety,
And earned the wages to the impious due, *earn sacrifice? no.*
Who Thee forsook, our King and Benefactor,
Father of all, Fount of eternal good,
And to dumb stones offered our orisons,
And to deaf logs uttered our empty vows.

Shameful confession ! man that apprehends
The Eternal Mind, with reason dowered, adores
Unthinking stocks : the living to the dead
Offers his incense ; with religious fear
The workman views his work.

Therefore, O Lord,
We that forsook have been ourselves forsaken.
Discomfited in war, and overwhelmed
By evil, we have paid the penalty.
For now by Idumea, now by Syria,
And now by Palestine, and now by Ammon,
Thy chosen land and heritage are defiled.

At length, instructed by adversity,
And by our foemen's ridicule constrained,
Tardy we turn, O Lord, to Thee again.
But Thou, O gracious God and pitiful,
Curbest the bridle of Thy vengeance just.
Thou lettest go Thine anger and forgett'st
Thy sore displeasure, and, compassionate,
Bring'st back Thy children that forsake their sin :
Nay, more, as though it were too slight a boon

To pardon guilty rebels, heap'st upon them
Glories all new and victory and fame.

Ammon dispirited, with bow unstrung,
Stript of his arms has fled, and many a corse,
Strewn over all the plains, impedes his cars
In their attempted flight. Who proudly forged
A chain for Israel is the vulture's food.
The slain bestrew the fields, and crimson gore
Of savage foemen swells the rising wave.

Therefore, O Maker of earth, and mighty Judge,
Cherishing the remembrance of Thy grace,
We gladly render thanks with grateful hearts,
And with ancestral rite we offer prayer,
And sacrifice our victims at Thy shrine ;
To Thee our God, and Parent of our sires,
Ascribing glory, Who through surging depths
Of the Red Sea didst passage safe provide
For our progenitors, what time the mass
Unwieldy of the sea, at Thy command,
Laid by its turbulence—the restless waves,
Compelled to change their course, grew motionless ;

Till, in a crystal wall suspended fast
On this side and on that, the glassy deep
Obeyed Thy will that it should yield a path.

Be mindful of Thy Covenant, O Lord ;
Be pleased to receive with favour this
Thy servant's vow, a thing of slight regard,
Yet giv'n with thankful heart, and recently
To Thee made payable : whatever first
May meet me on my safe arrival home
Will, as a pleasing sacrifice, imbue
Thine altar with its blood. 'Tis true, O Lord,
Thy goodness far surpasses victims all ;
Yet Thou construest with benevolence
The gifts of mindful votaries ; as Thou
Art faithful in the keeping of Thy word,
Shewing Thy might upon rebellious men,
Shewing Thy mercy to the men that fear Thee,
It is Thy pleasure that Thy servants too
Be faithful in the paying of their vows.
To Thee, O Lord, alone belongeth power,
Whom let the earth and sky and hell obey.

IPHIS, JEPH'THA, SYMMACHUS, AND
CHORUS.

Iphis.

I go ; with how great joy and happiness
I see the face of my returning sire.
O God ! how good Thou art ! . . . my honoured
father !
Let me be folded to thy loving heart. . . .
Why, father, dost thou turn, stern-eyed, away ?

Jephtha.

O wretched man that I am !

Iphis.

Upon our foes
May God divert this omen.

Jephtha.

Would He might !

But it descends on us.

Iphis.

Ah ! what do I hear ?

Jephtha.

Most wretched father of a wretched child !

Iphis.

Ah me ! I tremble. Is the army safe ?

Jephtha.

'Tis safe.

Iphis.

And thou victorious ?

Jephtha.

It is so.

Iphis.

Thy body is not hurt by any wound ?

Jephtha.

It is not.

Iphis.

Why, then, mourning, dost thou heave
So deeply-drawn and so mysterious sighs ?

Jephtha.

There is no need that thou shouldst know at present.

Iphis.

Wretch that I am ! What evil have I done
Against thee, O my father ?

Jephtha.

None at all.

My child, it is thy father wrongeth thee.

Iphis.

Assuredly I know of nought amiss
That thou to me hast done ; but, were it so,
The matter should not trouble thee at all.
[For children must with meek and patient mind
Receive such wrongs as parents may have done.

Jephtha.

Wise and becoming, daughter, is thy speech.
Yet, the more wise thy words the deeper still
Thou openest again my wounded heart.

Iphis.

My father, lay aside whatever care
Troubles thy mind. Forbear by thine own grief
To taint the joys by all our countrymen
Procured through thee ; let friends enjoy thy presence.

Jephtha.

For us this presence absence will beget.

Iphis.

Perchance war's perils call for thee anew.

Jephtha.

Crisis more grave than arms threaten my house.

Iphis.

Can graver risks than war's be found at home ?

Jephtha.

In war I safety found, at home I perish.

Iphis.

And, yet, through thee thy land and house are safe ?

Jephtha.

Yes : and for this to God my thanks I owe.

Iphis.

And may'st thou ever owe him thanks for this.

Jephtha.

I fear our safety will not long endure.

Iphis.

Wherefore, O father, now, when thine affairs
Are in the noontide of prosperity,
To pray becomes thee, and to pay thy vows :
Not, when the breath of changeful Fortune blows
The adverse way, to touch the heart of God
With supplications ; and, when thou art blest
With good success, to intermit thy rites
Religious, with oblivious neglect.
The man, who, whilst unharmed, makes it his aim
Well to deserve of gracious Deity,
Under assault of adverse circumstance,
Having endeavoured to secure the fruit
Of a good conscience, may with freedom dare
Approach a God propitious, and present
His vows with more assurance, and survey
The future with a better-grounded hope.

Jephtha.

To do this thing my purpose long has been.

Iphis.

Why then delay ?

Jephtha.

My daughter, leave these matters
To be attended to by me ; regard
As thy concerns the things that appertain
To character and years of maidenhood.

Iphis.

Whate'er affects my sire is my concern.

Jephtha.

Granted : but, for the present, see that all
At home is rightly ordered ; gratify
The wishes of thy father ; here again,
After a little while, return to me.
Thou should'st be present soon at sacrifice. ✓

Iphis.

Let be : I come again. . . . Ah wretched me !
What can have changed my father's wonted mind
Towards his child ? 'Tis but as yesterday
Never did father love his offspring more.
Now he is harsh, forbidding, stern, and fierce,
Bearing disquietude, as if of war,
Before him in his visage menacing.
Whate'er it be, I cannot, much I fear,
Divine that one affair wherefor he says
On my account he grieves ; for nought I know
Of any evil done by me that might
Offend a sire. O crowd of womankind !
By fortune hard exposed to whispering heights
That, howso innocent of blame ye be,
Malign report with spiteful tooth assails.
Whate'er the spleen of tattling slave may feign,
Whate'er a jealous husband may imagine,
Or ill-willed neighbourhood, is held for truth.
I have done nought to render me suspect
By him that did beget me ; this I deem
The surest medicine of my present grief :
To know the joy of conscience undefiled.

Symmachus.

Well hast thou spoken, O thou daughter true
Of a victorious sire, a mother chaste,
And famous land. Though man's malignity
May have contrived an accusation false,
To God are known the secrets of the heart,
And at His righteous bar the guiltless mind
Is vindicated ; 'tis from Him we hope
And strive to gain a well-spent life's reward.
But children meekly must endure the wrong
A father, just or unjust, may have done.
Go home, then, in obedience to thy sire.
I go to wait upon him, and shall watch
For any rumour that may blow abroad,
Which, caught, I straightway shall to thee disclose.

Chorus.

Why then not hasten to accomplish this,
Friend Symmachus ?

Symmachus.

It shall with care be done.

Chorus.

But to the utmost of thy power, set free
The trembling maiden from her anxious fear.
This is demanded by the ancient rite
Of friendship which, from cradled infancy,
Has to the course of loyalty been true.
This is demanded by thy native land
That owes its safe estate to Jephtha's hand.

Symmachus.

Why wilt thou not be silent, and commit
The matter to my trust ?

Chorus.

Nay, but take care
The thing is done with policy ; explore
The dark and inmost secrets of his soul.

Symmachus.

Fear not that he has power or will to hide
His mind from me ; my time I know and bide.

CHORUS.

HAPPY go ; and good success
Step for step with thee progress !
O may He Who all surveys—
Judge most just in all His ways—
He Who knows the inmost part,
All the secrets of the heart,
On thee in thy task attend—
Bring it to a prosp'rous end.

But for thee, O Envy curst !
Of the foes of men the worst,
Bold to fabricate a lie—
By a whisper false and sly
To embroil as foe with foe
Those that friendship's sweetness know—
To dissolve, by tale malign,
Wedlock's covenant divine—
Envy ! thou whom it doth fill
With rejoicing to instil

Venom dark in parent's tongue
For the stinging of his young—
O may He Who all beholds—
Judge who secret things unfolds—
Banish thee to gloom condign,
Thee to shades of hell consign!
Nevermore may issue thence
Rumour's wandering pestilence.

Were but God to set us free
From thy presence, then with thee
From the race of man would go
How much trouble toil and woe !
Direst cares, that make their prey
Human hearts, would flee away.

SYMMACHUS, JEPHTHA, AND CHORUS.

Symmachus.

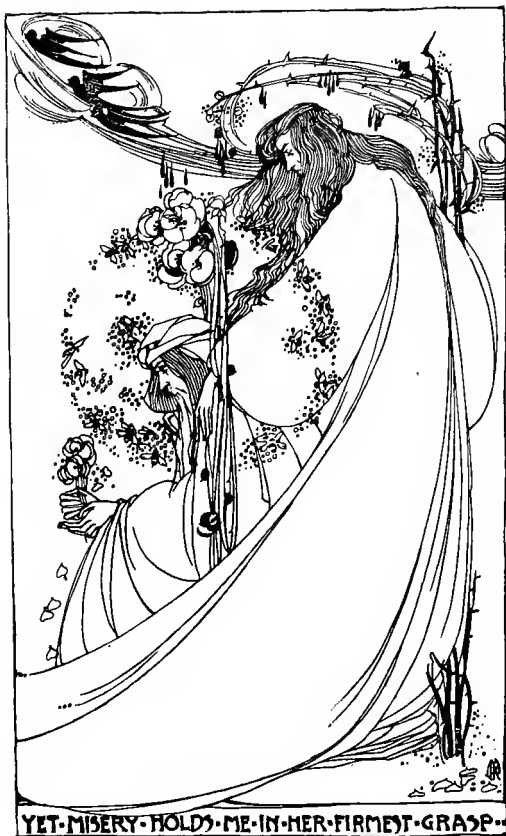
WHY, O commander great in martial fame,
Hath changed the fashion of thy countenance
Thus suddenly ? What melancholy mood
Troubles the gladsome joy that fits the time ?
Our fears have taken flight ; the faithless foe
Has suffered punishment ; tranquillity
Is now the portion of our native land.
At such a season, when the happy State
Rejoices with thee in thine hour of triumph,
When, on the breath of praise, thy country lifts
Thy name to heav'n, shouting her festal songs,
Is it not meet that thou, to whom we owe
The public joy, should'st with the public share
The celebration of thy victory ?

Jephtha.

O happy liberty of low estate
From weary care ! I judge him born beneath
A happy star, in some sequestered scene
Whose lot it is to lead a life obscure,
In silence safe, from all commotion far.

Symmachus.

More blest I deem the man whose valour true
Has won for him a name that will endure—
Who, drawn by glory from the common shade,
And from the indolent populace set apart,
Through future ages bears the chrism of fame.
As for the man who yields himself a prey
To lethargy and sloth, and leads a life
Sluggish as that of cattle, I opine
It matters nothing whether he be dead,
Or live a life than death more darkling still,
Both ways, by silence equally supprest.
Now, therefore, when the gifts of heav'n are showered
Upon thy head—praise, honour and success,
Splendour and victory—whatever boon
A favourable God can give to man—



YET MISERY HOLDS ME IN HER FIRMEST GRASP.

Gratefully own a bounty all divine,
Nor things so glorious taint with paltry saws.
Assure thee, nothing better pleases God
Than due remembrance of His benefits.

Jephtha.

Honour and splendour, victory and triumph,
And glory won in war are famous things.
But look more narrowly at that which seems
So sweet at one brief glance, and understand
That it is flavoured with a bitterness
As sharp as that of gall. Let fortune smile
Never so beamingly, in evil day
She for her favours payment may exact.
Such is the grievous changefulness of fate,
That mingles joy with grief, and grief with joy.
Thou deem'st me happy, measuring happiness
By idle splendour and the crowd's acclaim ;
Yet Misery holds me in her firmest grasp.

Symmachus.

Do but conceive a favourable fate
Thee to have proffered all thy heart's desire :

What, then, remains that thou still covetest ?
Despised, an exile from thy father's house
Repelled, and thrust into a solitude
Profound, the master of a humble hut—
Sudden, as in a dream, thou art become
A man of wealth ; yet judge so ill thou art
Of thine own bliss that thou complainest still.
If so it be that thou canst not stand erect
On fortune's heights, thou art of spirit mean :
Or, if thou canst not bring thy mind to own
The goodness of thy God, 'twere fit thou change
Thy present glory for thy former cot.
Men hunt for empery through fight and fire ;
To thee has come a princely destiny
Without thy stir. Many there be who win
Success in fight at cost of their own blood,
Or army thinned by death, and public loss ;
But thou, thyself unwounded, bring'st with thee
A bloodless triumph and an army safe.
The saviour of thy land, her foemen's dread,
To wealth exalted from a low estate,
Free who wast once a slave, thou with thy front
Strikest the lofty pinnacle of glory.

Raised from the populace, a princely place
Thou holdest ; nor is lacking ought at all
That may complete thy bliss, except it be
A spirit able to sustain the load
Of benefits so great, and fit to grace
The high prosperity of thine affairs.

Jephtha.

I see, my friend, thou shar'st the common error ;
But, with thy mind's eye, didst thou clear perceive
The mighty ill to which this mighty good
Is subject, thou that art thus wise profuse
In praise of my estate, would'st apprehend
That I am the most miserable of men.

Symmachus.

Comes it not almost never but by blame
That we ourselves incur—by fickleness
Of our unrestful souls—that we can bear
No lot at all with a well-balanced mind ?
The rich man praises the serenity
Of huts where poor men dwell—the stilly hush

Unbroken by the battle-trumpet, sleep
That dreams disturb not, nightly watches free
From care. Unstintedly the poor extol
Purple and gold, retainers, vassalage,
Magnificence, as if of regal state,
And spacious halls—deeming the rich alone
Are happy. But let each estate be weighed
And separately scanned—the truth is here :
With both there mingles something of distress.
The poor are vexed by want, the rich by fear.
The portion of the wealthy man is pleasure ;
The boon of poverty is unconcern.
A mingled cup of sweet and sour is dealt
By Fortune both on this side and on that.
But none the less that lot is to be held
The best of all in which a multitude
Of joys are mingled with distresses few.

Such is the lot God's mercy has assigned
To thee that bear'st a load of honour, fame,
Success and victory, which to wave away
Were action of a fool ; and not to own
As gift of God were to be faithless found ;

And not to bear with calm were proof, I deem,
That thou scarce worthy art of the name of man.

Jephtha.

In vain thou seek'st to heal this wound of mine
With common simples : know this injury
Remediless : it holds the seat of life,
And reaches to its depths my bosom's core.
Here is my sorrow's sting : home to my breast
My loss by blame, my fault by woe is prest.

Symmachus.

Why not disclose thy trouble to a friend ?
Fear not to trust it to a faithful ear.

Jephtha.

My vow—dost thou remember ought of it ?

Symmachus.

What thou didst promise, were the army safe ?

Jephtha.

(Thou hast it : would that I had warier been
And wiser in the offering of my vow !

Symmachus.

I cannot think what is this fault of thine.

Jephtha.

Which, yet, is to destroy both me and mine.

Symmachus.

What offered victim can destroy your lives ?

Jephtha.

My child, sole hope that to my house survives.

Symmachus.

Her wilt thou slay ? What would to this constrain ?

Jephtha.

She met me first when I came home again.

Symmachus.

But, say, in this how did thy child transgress ?

Jephtha.

(A vow once made demandeth faithfulness.

Symmachus.

Is this the care that weighs upon thy heart?

Jephtha.

It weighs, . . . nor can it from my breast be
pluckt

Till, stained with blood of dreadful sacrifice,

I, wretched man, do perish on the spot

Where I did cause my wretched family

To perish, paying thus the lawful debt

To them and to myself by me incurred ;

But Thou, O King, in Whose almighty hand

Quivers the thunderbolt—Who makest quail

The earth, the sky above, and hell beneath—

If ever, swift to follow Thy commands,

I ought have said or done that pleaseth Thee,

Attend my pray'r, with favour speed my vow.

I ask not now proud victories from Thee

And festal shouts of praise ; give war again ;

Let vengeful Ammon overcome and rush

Upon me in his fury, and expel

My guilty spirit with a thousand wounds.

Chorus.

Ah ! the change of startling Fate !
Nevermore may joys attend,
In a train that does not end,
Mortal man's estate.

Jephtha.

Or, Thou that split'st the sky with three-forked fire,
On me, a wretched, godless parricide,
Discharge the bolt by whirling flame propelled.
Banish my soul, that, thus far innocent,
Life, if prolonged, will brand with guilty stain,
Down to the depths profound of gloomy hell.

Symmachus.

So great affairs must not be rashly done
What time thy mind, shaken by darkling storm,
Chafes itself into fury ; calm thy soul.
When once this rage subsides, thy spirit free
Will sound advice receive, and, with thy friends
Deliberating, be resolved on all.

Jephtha.

Advice brings help to them that stand in doubt.
Who taketh counsel when no hope remains,
By his own act adds folly to his woe.

Symmachus.

While yet no action has been taken, help
And healing ever are at hand.

Jephtha.

To wit

For malady of such a character
As does of cure allow.

Symmachus.

If so it be

This matter difficult at first appear,
There is no instant reason for despair,
But rather all the more necessity
For taking counsel, inasmuch as oft
The coil that seems to one inextricable
Another will with ease at once unwind.

Be the result of counsel good or ill,
'Twill bring thee praise : if bad the consequence,
Thou hast at least absolved thyself from blame.
With a great counsellor to play the fool
Is almost to be wise. But be it so
That force resistless, fate inexorable
On all hands closes every door of hope,
If counsel cannot clearly forth be set,
Come what come may, this much will be evinced :
What men thou tookest with thee to consult.
Else, if thou others leave in ignorance,
And follow out thy novel course alone,
The man who, if consulted, had approved,
Will be the first to censure the event.
For, though of remedy he nothing knew,
Yet credit he for knowledge seeks to gain.

Chorus.

Scorn not the voice of admonition just ;
Rash doers oft repent in ash and dust.

CHORUS.

THOUGH I tell of painful things, and sad,
 Though new sorrow unto old I add,
 I design in order to express
 All the mother's and the child's distress.
 Prayer or plan may yet obtain relief
 From the gloom of this impending grief.
 Come what may, I judge that now I ought
 To bewail the common human lot.

First shall I lament the sire in woe,
 Bound by chain that will not let him go,
 And enslaved to the delusive thought
 Counsel to dispel availeth not,
 Only by an impious act that he
 Can intact preserve his piety?

Shed I for the wretched maid my tears,
 Whom in early flower of tender years,

How personal & pitiful then?

Show pathos & conflict only.

Sweetly blooming 'neath a vernal sky,
[Taught to cherish noble thoughts and high,
No incursive bands, that make a prey
Of her country, rudely snatch away,
Not a pestilence, tremendous doom
Sent by heav'n, despatches to the tomb ?
Sacrificial zeal in fatherhood
Dyes a dreadful altar with her blood ;
Warm with life, will stream the ruddy rain
Not from brutal, but from virgin vein.
Tender limbs that never are to know
Desecrating touch of savage foe—
Limbs that no ferocious mountain bear
Venture would with bloody tooth to tear—
Will the knife of sacrifice divide.
That which from victorious foe abide
Never did this miserable maid,
By victorious sire will be essayed.

Corses of our foemen ! widely spread
O'er the plains, if ever to the dead—
If to frames, of sense that seem bereft,
Any spark of consciousness be left,

While your conqu'ror does himself despise,
Mark him well, and glory in the sight.

Truly this is part of mortal lot :
Passages of joy continue not ;
Grief succeeds them, when their term is done,
As the dark ensues at set of sun,
As tempestuous Winter takes the place
Balmy-breathing Summer late did grace.
Joys unmingled are not found at all ;
Sorrow seasons each with bitter gall.
Fickle Fortune ever mixes up
Stern mutation with the human cup.
As when gentle Ocean placid lay
'Neath the light serene of peaceful day—
Massing murky force of Tempest, raves
Hurricane, and piles the surging waves ;
Here and there the ship, in doubtful state,
Staggers onward through the foaming strait,
Sucked by floods' regurgitating flow,
Rushing whither blasts of storm may blow :
See, herein, a picture of our life,
Passed in midst of rapine, death, and strife,

And the fear to mingle with the dead—
Fear than mortal end itself more dread ;
If a sunbeam dart upon our trouble,
'Tis but as, among the burning stubble,
Flits the gleam of evanescent flame—
Swift as breeze it goes, as swift it came.
Follow, then, of griefs a weary train—
Links of an interminable chain.

5th ed. of
life

JEPHTHA AND A PRIEST.

Jephtha.

O SUN, the author of the light of day !
O ye, my fathers ! O whatever powers
Are innocent of human wickedness !
Avert the face from this my cursèd rite.
Or Earth, about to drink the guiltless blood
Of maiden, yawn, and, through a vasty gulf,
Suck in my soul to caverns immense.
Bury me where thou wilt, while, free from crime,
I yet can perish. Into hell itself,
If so thou please, I do not grudge to go,
So there, unstained by parricide, I dwell.
Why do I speak of hell ? My home is hell. ✓
O, with how woe-begone a countenance—
With what a stream of gushing tears my wife
To me will make her prayer ! With what a face
My daughter, doomed to death, will me behold !

O what entreaties, urged in piteous tones,
Clasping my neck, will she to me address !

Priest.

Grief such as this is wont to company
With evils so extreme as when a wound
No surgeon's art can heal, or when a sin,
Once done, our hands are powerless to undo.
With thine own self it rests to make thy life
Wretched or happy ; thou'rt at liberty
To sacrifice thy daughter or to spare ;
Or, rather, thou art not at liberty,
If none by wilful choice would be in woe.
How can'st thou be at liberty to do
What piety opposes—God abhors ?
Of all affections deepest in our breast
Hath been by Nature planted love of offspring.
Nor doth this feeling move the heart of man
Alone, but whatso swiftly swims along
The pathways of the deep, and whatso cleaves
The air, on wings upborne—whatever form
Of life may issue from Earth's teeming womb—
Of this affection feels the sacred flame.

This love, eternal Providence of Sire
Divine hath into mortal breasts instilled
As power for use in nurturing their young,
And for the maintenance of general peace,
And for replenishing the earth with seed.
He hath, Himself, been pleased to be called
The Father, that more straitly He may press
Upon our minds the sense of parenthood :
Thus, by example which Himself affords,
And likewise beast, and fish, and fowl of air,
The bond of love parental He approves.
But we, who, to preserve our name of man,
Humanity should more than all display,
Are far surpassed in kindness by the brutes.
'Tis not enough for us to steep our hands
In crime ; it is our pleasure to impute
Our nameless guilt to heav'n ; we feign the lie—
Which Egypt, ignorant of Deity,
And the Assyrian, wholly given o'er
To superstition, do not fabricate—
That God in gory sacrifice delights.
What is more right for us, who owe our life
To fathers undefiled, than from the stain

Of guilt our hands to guard, and pious pay
The rites immaculate by God enjoined ?
In vain we seek to win the smile of heav'n
By slaughtered victims, or by oxen's blood.
The sacrifices of our God are hearts
Untainted by th' infecting touch of sin,
And minds that simple verity informs,
And uncontaminated consciences.

Jephtha.

| Why, then, do victims holy laws require ?

Priest.

| 'Tis not because their death rejoices God,
| Or flesh of calves His hunger satisfies,
| But He commands us to obey His Word.

Jephtha.

| The vows we offer ought we not to pay ?

Priest.

| Yes : but the law demands we offer none
| But righteous vows.

Jephtha.

I grant it hath been well
At first to promise what would be approved
By our ancestral customs ; now the thing
Is done, and what has once been vowed to God
A heav'n-sent law commands us to resign.

Priest.

What law demands that parents offspring slay ?

Jephtha.

That which commands us offered vows to pay.

Priest.

Promise, 'twere sin to keep, can God allow ?

Jephtha.

The greater sin is not to pay our vow.

Priest.

Suppose thy vow to burn the laws of sires ?

Jephtha.

No mortal sane would vow them to the fires.

Priest.

Why? Is it not because the laws condemn?

Jephtha.

It is.

Priest.

Well, children-slayers—what of them?

Jephtha.

Not what we do so weighs as why we do.

Priest.

To God's commands is not obedience due?

Jephtha.

Abram to slay his son did God command.

Priest.

Who bade, forbade to lay on him a hand.

Jephtha.

Why bade He him ?

Priest.

To put his faith to proof,
Of all succeeding ages in behoof.

Jephtha.

And why forbade He ?

Priest.

Surely thus He shows :

The willing spirit, that the gift bestows,
More pleaseth him than offered victims could.

Jephtha.

Admittest thou to keep God's laws is good ?

Priest.

Most certainly.

Jephtha.

Does God to vow command ?

Priest.

Ay.

Jephtha.

Payment of our vows does He demand?

Priest.

'Tis so.

Jephtha.

Delay in payment does He chide,
And on the faithless does His wrath abide?

Priest.

A paltry pretext for a deed of crime!
Who chooses nameless wickedness to do,
Enslaves himself to his insensate moods,
And vain imaginations. Therefore cease,
Whatever vow thou mayst have made to God,
To claim His sanction for thy cruelty.
Shall He who hates the wicked, and proclaims,
By sacred laws, unholy rites accurst,
With favour look on act of wickedness?

The voice of God is one—unmingled truth ✓
For ever in agreement with itself.
Not one of His commandments but pursues,
In changeless path, its course inviolate ;
Nor, by a hair's-breadth to the right or left,
Can ought avail to turn it. This design
Should man before him set with single heart :
To regulate the counsels of his life
By universal ordinance of Truth.
For God hath this appointed as a torch
Through pathways dim our faltering feet to guide,
And drive the shades of error from our sight.
Since from this lamp thou has confessed that far
Thy footsteps rash are bent, before they stray
To further distance, seek the path again.
If thou supposest that thy foolish vows
Can be atoned for by a heinous rite,
Thou art deceived. That act of cruelty
Will not remove, but aggravate, thy guilt.
Let no delusive semblance cheat thy mind :
Our God, while He delights in hallowed gifts,
With scorn rejecteth vows abominable ;
And none has hurtless borne himself away

Who, albeit by holy zeal inspired,
Kindled upon His altar fire profane.
Despise not, then, the voice of friendly warning,
And, in the wish to gain the grace of God,
Refrain thou from provoking Him to wrath.
He taketh no delight in worship paid
According to thy self-imposed design :
The worship He accepts obeys the laws,
And rites, and customs, which Himself approves.

Jephtha.

Of't have I found that men who wisest seem,
And put a value on themselves above
The ignorant crowd, possess the least discretion.
None in such heartless fashion celebrates
Our ancient worship, or more cheap regards
Our holy mysteries : artless and untaught,
And innocent of guile, the common throng
Hold fast their vows, and that inviolable
Account which they have promised once to God.
But nothing, now-a-days, methinks, is held
To smack of wisdom, but to know the art

Of hiding evil with a seemly veil,
And varnishing the vilest deed of sin.
Whereas with justice it were better deemed
Faultless to be, than innocent to seem,
Or, with the cloak of wily vigilance,
A wicked bosom's cunning to conceal.
Therefore, let whoso would his children have
After a life of piety aspire,
Take heed he, more than due, instruct them not,
For the more skilled a man in arts of schools
The less regardful he of things divine.

Priest.

If thou hast time, yet hear me, excellent sir.
How easy 'tis for sightless ignorance
To fool the simple mind ! He who defends
His deeds with shield of popular delusion,
I deem, in no wise palliates his fault.
Nor does the universal Sire supreme
To maxims ill such governance allow
As that, at wicked crowd's consenting will,
Should virtue vice, and evil good become.

And, though it be the pleasing blandishments,
That flatter tyrants, so abuse the names
Our actions bear, as to commend a sin ;

✓ It does not follow to the multitude

~~That what seems right is straightway right indeed.~~

The quality of Truth is ever one
And uncompounded ; this no tyrant might,
Or will, howe'er so powerful, can avail
In any wise to foul or to destroy.

Now, then, in general, among the crowd
The more unlearnèd any man may be,
The greater his assurance in his claim
To be a judge in matters most obscure ;
And, if some notion he has once embraced,
With obstinacy born of ignorance
He wards it, nor submits it to the test
Of balance true, to prove it right or wrong ;
But, blind, he charges them that see with blindness,
Although, himself, he sees the worst of all.
As one, whose burning veins with fever glow,
Supposes all things bitter, and esteems
No palate sound but his, though most it errs ;
So ye, whose souls are shrouded by a mist

Of gloomy darkness, fain would rule the men
Whom it would best become you to obey :
Ye deem yourselves the teachers of the wise
By whose instructions ye should guide your course,
And thus do ye make shipwreck of your lives.
To worship God by self-invented plan,
Or victims indiscriminate to slay,
Is not true faith and piety, but this :—
To offer sacrifices in accord
With claims of laws imposed by heav'n on man,
And sanctioned by the customs of our sires.

Jephtha.

Whate'er with mind sincere is done, to God
Is pleasing, and whate'er from simple heart
Proceeds, He ever graciously receives.
The spirit of the giver, not his gift
Of gold, obtains the favour of the Lord.

Priest.

If what is right be spoiled by wickedness
Of evil heart, it follows not from this
That foolish mind can make the crooked straight.

Now, what ye right, and honest, and sincere
Are pleased to call, is maddest falsity,
Unless, perchance, there can be ought more false
Than eyes to close upon the light of truth.
Then thou, to blindness voluntary prey,
On specious pretext cravest praise for crime,
And tak'st away the differences of things,
The while thou art resolved within thy mind
To deem that wrong is right, and foul is fair,
At the dictation of the rabblement.
But, if to fools' arbitrament such power
Attach as that it maketh good of bad,
Just of unjust, and sacred of profane,
Why not conclude that these same witless men
Are likewise able to convert at will
Fire into water, water into fire,
Stones into fagots, and to call the dead
Back into life again : if such their power,
Let them arrest the rapid flight of time,
And banish from the world perpetual change.
But, if thou judgest this exceeds the power
Of mortal man, and appertains alone
To Him that hath the world's foundations laid,

aws He once put forth
permanent and fixt,
has been vouchsafed
erewith to man.
g day of ultimate doom
atutes ; earth and sky
melt in final flame,
; law by heav'n ordained
shall discrown.

Jephtha.

possess repute
ay, if so ye please,
h these words of yours.
sh Truth prefer
led by deceit.

Keep in mind to be
convinced

CHORUS.

O MOTHER in Israel,
Whose life was late the pattern of a favoured lot,
How swift hath Fortune fell
On thee destruction brought !
With what a sudden stroke doth Fate o'erthrow
Thy glory that had reached the stars at last,
And turned thy smiling sunshine to a stormy blast
Of sighs and bitter woe !

Alas ! the knowledge hath been never won
By man of woman born,
What on the coming morn
It may be his to seek for or to shun.

Redoubted leader ! thee to-day
Who did not with an envious mind survey ?
Well-nigh beyond thine own desire,
A happy fortune beamed upon thy way.

The lustre of a famous race,
The blessing of a hallowed couch,
The glory that thy deeds avouch—
All these were late thine own.
Ah ! what a change comes now !
Sudden disaster hath upon thee rushed,
A heap of ruins takes thy fortune's place,
Beneath it thou art crushed.
Thee in thy woeful state
Our very foemen might commiserate,
As, calling back thy vow,
The voice of thy lament
Thou liftest upward to the firmament.

Surely the mists of Error so surround
The minds of mortal men,
And Ignorance profound
So buries in her dark and noisome den,
That never power in them is found
Of simple Truth, clear-eyed, to see the ray,
Of Virtue plain to tread the certain way.

But, as an elfin Light,
That flits where secret ways through forest shadows
 wind,
The traveller beguiles,
And, by its cunning wiles,
Conducts his erring feet
To where, with doubtful course, a thousand path-
 ways meet ;
And, while his footsteps wander
Where devious tracks meander,
A pleasing or displeasing road he cannot find :
'Tis so with every mortal wight ;
✓ We wander here and there with doubtful mind,
And cannot find a way to lead our feet aright.

One man of restless mood
Seeks, as the highest good,
To win a victor's name,
And from the rigorous field of war to reap
The laurel that is bought with blood.
He binds it on his brow, while widows weep,
And gains the noisy cheers of futile fame.

Another pays the price
Of childless home, in crowd of parasites ;
He foils their schemes with craftier device,
And gaping rooks to make, in turn, his sport delights.

Another would not give the murmurs bland
And babbled plaint of infant tongue
For all the wealth that Cræsus can command,
Or all the yellow sand
The affluent wave of Hermus rolls along.

But no one hath the power
So wisely to ordain his course of life,
As with his own appointments not to be at strife
Ten times, it may be, in a single hour.

And see, in grievous woe,
The wretched mother and her child draw nigh.
Alas ! how changed from those who were, an hour
ago,
Beheld by every eye,
As, flushed with recent victory's glow,

They with their lofty foreheads almost touched the
sky !

With envy-stirring blessings were they fraught ;
But now they instance yield of changeful human lot.

So God, for woe or weal,
The affairs of man doth onward wheel,
As nimble dust is driven
By the swift-whirling wind of heaven ;
Or as the white array,
When skies with wintry storms are overcast,
Flung by the furious blast
Upon the lofty mountains, and the spreading fields.
Soon as the gale hath ceased,
And, in the rosy East,
Flames the effulgent torch of lightsome Day,
The snowy mantle yields,
And, almost ere the sun is seen, dissolves away.

STORGE, JEPHTHA, AND IPHIS.

Storge.

O EXPECTATION vain ! my child, for thee
I was preparing marriage festival.
I longed that joyful morning to descry
When I should see thee, by a prosperous lot,
Blest with a noble husband, and increased
With children ; and I promised to myself
That thou wouldst be the solace and the stay
Of my declining years ; but, all in vain,
I prophesied of thee deceitful dreams.
A wrathful Fate with measureless derision
Assails me, and, with furious cruelty,
From the high peak of rapture drags me down,
Involving all in wreck at one assault.
Thrice-happy they who, by a hostile sword,
Or by the scourge of famine, or by plague,
Have been bereaved of children ; for their tears

Are free from taint of sin, and they can charge
Another hand than theirs with their distress.
But here, in single sin, a host of sins
Hath Fortune mingled :—sire that slays his child,
Most wicked rites, and, after savage mode,
An altar stained with impious sacrifice.

If holy rites, observed with holiness,
Alone thou deem'st acceptable to God,
Away, then, with this heathenish ordinance !
Or, if by inhumanity is gained
The favour of thy God, then slaughter thou
Me also, as a victim, with my child.

Jephtha.

My fate hath in itself more than enough
Of bitterness, without access of ill.
Cease, therefore, to incense thyself and me
By loud reproach that does not help our grief.
For, though of stern misfortune all possess
Their share, my lot is sterner far than yours.
With all your ills is mingled innocence,
Your sore distress is free from soil of sin.

I neither can be wicked without woe,
Nor live in sorrow without wickedness.
To do as well as to endure the act
I only am compelled.

Storge.

That is to say
Thou, of thine own accord, compel'st thyself.

Jephtha.

Would that this vow were matter of my choice,
And that without impiety I might
Refuse what I have promised !

Storge.

Wicked vows
Can never be acceptable to God.

Jephtha.

My victory proves that God accepted them.

Storge.

What ! canst thou promise what is not thine own ?

Jephtha.

Is not my child my own ?

Storge.

To such extent

As she is also mine. She is a pledge
Of mutual love : why, therefore, may her sire
Destroy, while I may not protect her life ?
Nay, be it so that children may, of right,
Be made the sport of either parent's whim,
And that love's bond by impious divorce
Asunder may be broken at our will,
(Then, in our offspring greater share than thine,
In justice, there would appertain to me—
A mother who, to save her child, would fain
Withdraw her from a father who designs,
Of his free choice, to yield her up to death.
What if her sire a husband for his child
Had chosen, and her nuptial rites were nigh,
Would not our mutual authority,
With equal force, command our child's consent ?
But this is an unreasonable league—

A usurpation of the partner's rights
In wedlock :—that the mother may not save,
And yet the father may destroy his child ;
If to destroy he can, indeed, be said
Her whom he slaughters, while he boasts himself,
Standing beside his daughter done to death,
In his parade of inhumanity—
Who, while he rends the curtain of the soul,
While from her side he plucks the savage blade,
Therewith extracting, from the inmost seat
Of life, the lingering spirit, yet desires
To be beheld, and lacks not solacement ;
But makes his daughter's blood a bait for fame,
And with an air of sanctimony seeks
To counterpoise a crime, and plumes himself
Upon the praises of his parricide.
If, moved by raging madness, thou hast cast
From thee a parent's miud towards his child,
At least permit a mother's tender heart
To love what not to love were height of sin,
To save what to destroy were height of crime,
What to have willingly delivered up
Were blacker deed than any parricide,

And what, with one's own hand, to immolate
Were savagery worse than that of beasts.
If we must needs divide our pledge of love,
Thus our division is not fairly made :—
That thou should'st have the power of life and death,
Whilst I, her mother, should have nought but tears,
Sorrow, and sighing, and the voice of woe.
O, thou more callous than the senseless rocks!
Surely from some rough oak thy life hath sprung,
Or the sharp flints among the dens of beasts,
And thou dost hold no drop of human blood.
While weeps his daughter, while his wife laments,
Gives to his mournful kinsfolk any groan,
As sign of woe, the butcher of his child ?

Throw thyself down, child, at thy father's feet.
By tears or by entreaties, if thou canst,
Bend his hard heart and break his iron mind.

Iphis.

Pity me, father, I pray thee, by this hand
That has obtained thy wish, and victory won.



HUNG AS A SWEET BURDEN FROM THY NECK

If ever I have well deserved of thee—
If ever clasped thee with my little arms,
And hung, as a sweet burden, from thy neck—
By ought of pleasure thou in me hast found—
Turn from thy cruel design towards thy child.
Forget this fierceness : or, if any ill
I have against thee done, then make it known,
For better I could bear whatever comes,
Should I but know I suffered my deserts . . .
Why dost thou turn away thy countenance ? . . .
Wretch that I am ! what evil have I done
To make me so detested by my sire
That on my face he cannot bend an eye ?

Jephtha.

No evil, daughter, hath been done by thee.
The sin is mine, mine only is the guilt.
Thou of my rashness, in thine innocence,
Dost pay the price. I, miserable man,
Have both myself and thee, poor child, undone,
By vow unspeakable. O, would to God
I had been wavier in those words of mine,
Or else in battle more unfortunate,

And, gathered to the heap of valiant men
In honourable death by hostile hand,
I had pre-occupied my port of woe !
A bitter lot has kept me still in life
That grief on grief attending I may see.
I swear to thee by that accursèd vow
Which I have made against the will of God,
And by the load of my calamity,
And by the piteous memory of thy loss,
If thou from death could'st by another's death
Be ransomed, gladly would I give my life
For thee, my daughter. Do I seem to be
Qught happier than you, my wife and child ?

Iphis.

Thou art as miserable as are we,
Or even more so.

Storge.

My authority
As parent is esteemed of slight account,
Therefore, as spouse to spouse, but one request,
And that my last, I make : give thou command

That I likewise should die. If thou me lov'st,
Thou may'st ascribe my death to my own will,
And, if thou hate me, say thou compassed it.
Deliver me by death from all my woes,
And from thy troubles thine own self set free.

Jephtha.

More than enough the load of guilt I bear
By sacrifice of one.

Storge.

O holiness !

O righteousness and innocence ! forsooth,
The slayer of his offspring fears to sin !

Iphis.

My dearest mother, prithee, dry thy tears,
Cease thy complaints, disputes and loud reproach ;
And thou, my father, lay aside the care
That weighs upon thy breast ; nor interchange
A word upon the matter of my death.
That thou hereto art driven unwillingly—

Of stern compulsion—I am brought to see
By many things, as : this thy present grief,
Thy former tenderness, my consciousness
That I have done no wrong that might deserve
Death from my sire. Wherefore, whatever be
The dire necessity that calls for this,
I grudge no more to suffer patiently ;
I gladly render up the life I owe
My father and my country : hear the last
Request I make thee, mother, who henceforth
Will never any more ask ought of thee ;—
Harbour no anger, trouble not my sire
Because of me : be sure if, to the dead
And buried, any consciousness survive
Of things the living do, it will afford
More than ought else of pleasure to my ghost
To have assurance that ye live your life
In bliss and weal, and that on you, my parents—
To each of whom I ought to minister
The mutual offices of life, and pay
The debt I owe you for my nurturing,
And be your stay in feebleness of age—
Through me, should never grief nor pain be brought.

Storge.

Would that the sway of Ammon might return,
(If such a prayer be holy and devout)
And that our country bore his yoke again !
Then, daughter, though a slave, thou still would'st
 live,
Or thou, at least, no heinous death would'st die.
The fury of a proud and raging foe
Were gentler than a father's victory.
For, by a turn of fate most strange and sad,
A vow means bondage, victory means defeat.
Stern Fortune ! that, till now, on us hast smiled,
What floods of bitter tears dost thou exact
As usury for loan of transient joy !

Iphis.

Nay, rather, be the retribution just
Of their offences by our foes endured :
And, if it needs be, let us consecrate
With blood our guiltless altars, and requite,
Freely and gladly, with one sacrifice
The slaughter of a host of enemies.

Jephtha.

Ah, daughter, now at length I understand,
Wretch that I am ! how savage, foul, and fell
Has been my purpose rashly to bereave
Myself of such a child. With all my heart
On mine own head I will requite my sin.
'Twould be unjust that thou, a harmless girl,
Should'st expiate my madness, while survives
The author of thy sorrow. I myself
Will recompense my folly : in reproach
Of me no spiteful neighbourhood will say
That I, my daughter's murderer, spared myself
In life's last stage, and held my offspring's blood
So cheap as to exact it for the price
Of the vain breath of a disgraceful fame.
But thou, whose age hath better claim to live,
Blest with this love of thine, live for thy sire !
Live for thy land ! thy parent who alone,
According to desert, can recompense
Thy noble disposition, with his life
Will buy what, free of cost, he cannot give.

Iphis.

Refrain, O sire, from joining word to word
In hindrance of my purpose : do not break
My heart with tender speeches : 'tis not right
Or just that thou this office in my stead
Should'st execute : 'tis me thy vow demands.
Therefore I gladly offer up my life
To thee, my father, and my native land.
The day will never dawn that can disprove
My title to be sprung of Jephtha's race.
Take me . . . bring me . . . command they lead
me hence.

Consecrate victim, vowed to the altar—
Love of the sunlight I have abandoned.
Tedious is all delay ; my dearest mother,
Farewell ! and thou, my father's Home, wherein
I happy days have passed, with tender love
Nurtured in generous hopes—for splendid rites
Of nuptial day designed—a long farewell !
O Fate ! O Fate ! O spirits of my sires !
Receive ye graciously this soul of mine,
To welfare of my country consecrate !
And thou, O Light of day ! the last of all
Our eyes drink in for ever, fare thee well !

CHORUS.

PRAISE and pride of womankind !

Glory of thy noble race !

✓ Thou that art a maid in grace,
But a very man in mind !

What though Fate, with wanton shears,

Cut away thy goodliest years—

Pluck in fierce and ruthless rage

Tender blossom of thine age ?

What she takes away in days,

She restores in deathless praise.

And, to multitudes unborn,

Where o'er furthest Ind the Morn

Lifts her globe of golden flame

Tongues will tell aloud thy fame.

He that drinketh of the Nile

Ere its wave hath sped a mile,

He that, putting fear afar,

Crosseth, in Sarmatian car,
Frozen Danube's glassy stream
Thee will make his praise's theme.

They will sing of thee a maid
By no mortal dread dismayed,
Who thy native land for dower
Gladly gav'st thine age's flower.

Long, O maiden ! o'er thy story
Will our virgins grieve and glory.
They that never laid a head
On the holy marriage-bed,
As the seasons come and go,
Still shall sing their song of woe ;
Still, with lamentable wail,
Shall recount thy piteous tale.

As for you, who, to your shame,
Grudge your land the vital flame,
Time shall quench your paltry spark,
Whelm you in eternal dark,

And oblivion profound,
Useless cumberers of the ground !
Men inglorious ! the disgrace
And reproach of human race,
Whom the passing hours disown,
Who, to-morrow, are not known.

STORGE AND A MESSENGER.

—
Storge.

AN, wretched me ! is every hope of help
Extinguished ? Speak.

Messenger.

O lady, the affair,
For thing of woe, has happened not so ill.

Storge.

If any good has chanced, 'tis flattery
Of cruel Fortune that with honey sweet
Mingles the deadly poison of her cup.
Relate, then, what of ill thou fain would'st hide.
My heart is blunted by acquaintanceship
And lengthened intercourse with grief ; no more
Can fate accomplish that may do me hurt.
A sure but miserable apathy
Remains for me.

Messenger.

Then, madam, hear, in brief,
How the event befell. As o'er against
The dismal altar stood the virgin fair
For sacrifice designed, her visage pale
Was mantled with a crimson blush of shame
As unaccustomed to the spectacle
Of multitude of men : so one might stain
With purple dye the ivory of Ind,
Or roses mix with lilies white as snow.
And, yet, the ruddy glow that did suffuse
Her countenance was more than that of shame :
Manifest valour, dauntless trust were there.
While other eyes were tearful, hers were dry,
And, with a tranquil mien, erect she stood.
But, though the maiden, now about to die,
Repressed her tears, the people freely wept.
Here was one heart by the remembrance touched
Of recent service rendered by her sire,
And native land from servile yoke redeemed.
Another mourned her grievous change of lot,
The loneliness of an illustrious house,

Abiding grief the price of fleeting joy,
And seldom firmly-grounded confidence
In the prosperity of man's affairs.
Another wept the flower of maidenhood,
Her eyes like stars, her hair that vied with gold,
Her more than woman's constancy of mind.
Mayhap had Nature breathed into her frame
A more than wonted dignity and grace,
As though she deemed the death of heroine
So noble, worthy of a final gift.
As, in departing, pleases most the eye
The glory of the sun that hastes to set
Beneath the Atlantic billow, as the hue
And scent of roses most enchant the sense
When Summer is about to take her flight,
This virgin, standing on the utmost verge
Of destiny, for sacrifice prepared,
Shewing no weak unwillingness to die,
By no base dread of her departure numbed,
Gave pause to all, and, with a marvellous power,
Attracted to herself the steady gaze
Of the astounded populace, and caused
A gloomy hush to settle o'er the crowd.

Storge.

Proceed to tell the manner of the fact.
Nor spare a mother's ears ; thou can'st relate
Nothing so sad to hear as that my mind
Something does not imagine sadder still.
I more than have anticipated all.

Messenger.

Thereafter did this valorous-minded girl,
Lifting her eyes to the bright stars of heaven,
Give utterance, with her taintless lips, in tones
Unbroken by adversity, to prayer :—

“ Eternal Father of all, Parent divine
Of men, look favourably on Thy people.
Forgive their sin, and graciously receive
The victim that they offer. If it be
That Thou demandest ought to pacify
Thine anger, then, I pray whatever guilt
We, who with obstinate pride our Father Thee
Abandoned, have incurred, this blood of mine

May expiate. O would that it were mine
To shed it more than once for native land !
Yea, if the preservation of my sire
And countrymen thereon depend, I would
That, through a thousand deaths, I could divert
Thy stroke of wrath and fury on myself.
But priest what fearest thou ? (for icy fear
Had made him tremble) come, despatch from light
This soul ; unbolt the door that stays its flight,
And from this vow my father and the State
And mine own self hereby emancipate."

*Patric Henry
Johnson here*

As thus the maiden spake, long time her sire,
A cruel sight, than tiger more enraged,
Cursing himself for his incautious vow,
With his apparel, hid his streaming eyes.
Dissolved in tears, the priest had scarce the power
To ope a pathway for the maiden's soul.
A gloomy silence long the voiceless crowd
Kept spellbound ; but when once again the course
Of speech was clear, no groan, no murmured sound
And wailing, such as that of those in woe,
Was heard : the noise confused that filled the air

Was that of an assemblage giving thanks,
And hailing thee as, for the grievous wounds
Of adverse fate, and for the gladsome gifts
Of pleasing fortune, one who art, at once,
Most blest and woe-begone of womankind :
For, deeply as thy heart is pierced with grief,
Thy great distress is mixed with comfort great.

Storge.

The solace is more grievous than the ill.
The old affliction, that it seems to soothe,
It aggravates indeed, and, evermore
Recalling to my mind my bitter grief,
It makes my gaping wounds to bleed anew.
✓ The more courageously my daughter died,
The keener anguish must my soul abide.

NOTES.

BUCHANAN'S PREFACE.—P. 20. *Getic*, i.e.. Gothic.—The use of this adjective, with a double meaning, cost Helvius Pertinax his life. The Emperor Caracalla, who had murdered his brother, Geta, had assumed the names of several vanquished nations. Pertinax remarked that the name *Geticus* might be appropriately added to Parthicus, Alemannicus, etc. Buchanan has been blamed by Vinetus for using the expression *Geticus Mars* on the ground that the reference of the poet Ausonius, from whom he quotes, is to the war waged by the Roman Emperor against the Goths, whereas Cossé was fighting against the Ligurians. "But," says the Annotator to the Folio Edition of Buchanan's Works (Edinburgh: Robert Freebairn), "Vinetus appears to be under a mistake, for the epithet *Geticus Mars* is a very common one among the poets." "*Geticus*," he goes on to say, on the authority of Turneb., *Advers.*, book iv., chap. 22, "is the same as *Thracius*; and Mars was so called, because Juno miraculously conceived and gave birth to him in Thrace."

P. 44. JEPHTHA : *Chemosh thy god*.—According to Judges, xi. 24, Chemosh, the national deity of the Moabites, was also the national deity of the Ammonites. The opinion has been expressed that there is here an error in the text, and that for Chemosh should be substituted Milcom, the special god of the Ammonites.



P. 48. CHORUS: *Flashed the scythe-blade on the wheel.*—The scythed chariot was in ancient times frequently employed by Eastern belligerents. At the battle of Arbela, there were two hundred of these in the army of Darius. According to a statement contained in a speech by the Emperor Alexander Severus to the Roman Senate, the army of Artaxerxes, with which he was engaged in A.D. 233, was furnished with no fewer than eighteen hundred chariots armed with scythes.

P. 78. JEPHTHA: *On me, a wretched, godless parricide.*—The word in the original is *parricida*. The English equivalent is here used in the wider sense given in Johnson's *Dictionary*:—"One who destroys any to whom he owes particular reverence."

P. 103. CHORUS: *For all the wealth that Croesus can command.*—This passage has called forth the following adverse criticism from Dr. Irving (*Memoirs of Buchanan*, 2nd edition, p. 32):—"The Chorus in very familiar terms mentions Croesus, who was not born till about six hundred years after Jephtha." This, Irving thinks, is a glaring example of impropriety; but, if our dramatist errs, he errs in good company. Shakespeare, as is pointed out by Dr. Johnson in his Preface to the works of that writer, "had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. . . . We do not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the

only violater of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantage of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure."

P. 119. CHORUS: *Frozen Danube's glassy stream*.—"The Pannonian legions," says Gibbon, were "accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube" (chap. v.). "Some ingenious writers," says the same historian (chap. ix.), "have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present." In support of their theory, Gibbon mentions (*ibid.*) that "The great rivers which covered the Roman Provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their numerous armies, their cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vast and solid bridge of ice. Modern ages have not presented an instance of a like phenomenon."

P. 121. MESSENGER:

*O lady, the affair,
For thing of woe, has happened not so ill.*

Buchanan sacrifices the unity of time to the exigencies of the drama, suppressing the fact that Jephtha's daughter bewailed her virginity two months before her father "did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." To quote Dr. Johnson again (Preface to Shakespeare), "Nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action."

P. 122. MESSENGER :

*So one might stain
With purple dye the ivory of Ind.*

An imitation of Virgil :—

“ Indum sanguīneo veluti violaverit ostro
Si quis ebur ; vel mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
Alba rosa ; tales virgo dabat ore colores.”

Aeneid, xii. 67.



